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"THE MAN WHO MADE THE TRACKS."

TRACKS FROM THE TRIPS
OF A
TRAVELING MAN

BY
O. P. STEARNS

ILLUSTRATIONS BY

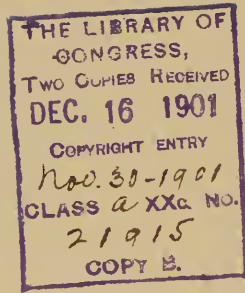
VIVA C. STEARNS

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WINTHROP
ST. LAWRENCE COUNTY, NEW YORK
1901

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*Copies of this Book will be sent to any address, on the receipt of One Dollar,
by Miss Wilhelmena Stearns, Winthrop, St. Lawrence Co., N. Y.*

TO MY WIFE AND CHILDREN

*Whose love and affection are more
to me than all other blessings,
I affectionately dedicate this book.*

PREFACE.

I have no excuses to offer for this book, else it never would have appeared. The "Tracks" have been written in hotels, stores, railway trains and depots, driving on the highway, or wherever and whenever a thought came to me that is made use of.

No part of it has been rewritten nor revised, as the life of a business man permits of doing a thing but once, whether done well or ill. The "Personal Poems," in Part Second, will be of little or no interest to the general public; in fact they will likely seem too simple to publish. I will only say that my original intention was to publish this book for private distribution to my immediate friends only, and it is at their request that I add the "Personal Poems."

As the immortal Lincoln once said: "For any one who likes just this kind of a book, this is just the kind of a book they will like."

O. P. STEARNS.

Winthrop, N. Y., 1901.

TO MY BROTHER TRAVELING MEN.

In the "Reverie of an old Grip" I have endeavored to remember and name all the Traveling Men with whom I was acquainted on my route from 1881 until 1892 and the men who kept the Hotels at that time where we met. That I have failed to remember them all, I have not a doubt. To those if any, whose names I have omitted, I can only say that my regrets will be much greater than yours possibly can be, for I have studied long and faithfully to recall them.

Had I acted my own pleasure, I would have mentioned some of the peculiarities of many of the "Boys," but fearing however good my intentions, I might offend by so doing, I have refrained. None but one who has traveled for many years can appreciate the fellow feeling that Commercial Men have for each other, and especially for those you have known long and well. To the few that are left who have grown gray in the service, as well as to all the others I can only say, God bless you every one.

Fraternally,

O. P. STEARNS.

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A "DRUMMER."

YES, I'm a "Drummer," and am proud of it too ;
Twenty years I have traveled, and still am not through ;
Not many are left that were on the road then,
And their places are filled by a new lot of men.

Some have gone where a man gets just what he is worth,
Some fell by the wayside and are still upon earth ;
Just a few became rich and don't need to earn more ;
And a few are still plodding from mountain to shore.

I could count what are left, who were then on my route,
By the fingers and thumbs on my hands ; and without
Counting fingers or thumbs over twice.
Don't you think those remaining should be worth a good price ?

Twenty years : that's a long while to stay "on the road,"
Never knowing just where you will make night's abode ;
Only sure of one thing (and the " Firm " wrote that down),
" Don't miss any man, and don't skip any town."

Oh yes ; I well know that the common remark
Is, " What good times you must have, just a regular lark ;
I'd like to live easy as you fellows do,
'Twould be nothing but fun just to travel, like you."

“Fun,” did you say? “Just to travel, that’s all?”
“Fun,” did you say, when like wormwood and gall
Are the days and the nights that we almost lose breath,
When some loved one at home is sick nigh unto death?

How well I remember (it was in Ninety-three),
A telegram sent by my wife, came to me,
Saying, “Can’t you come home? I don’t mean you to fright,
But the Doctor says Ralph may not live through the night.”

I took the next train, and oh! ’twas so slow,
It seemed I would never reach Baby, and know
That he lived; that he knew me; that even so weak
He could move his thin lips, and “Papa,” could speak.

I felt that if Baby could only get well,
I never again would leave home, but would tell
To my House, that another man they must procure;
That I would resign, and home comforts secure.

The Baby got well, and is now quite a boy;
I went back “on the road,” and am in the employ
Of the same Firm to-day I was working for then;
They said, “You must stay, for ’tis hard to get men.”

This is not a mere tale of the fancy, I’ve told;
Every man on the road, if he be very old,
Has had such experience; and many can tell
Of clouds thick and heavy, that over them fell.

Yes, I know nearly all have a smile on their face ;
We are schooled to be pleasant ; and swallow with grace
What is often so bitter the soul shrinks within ;
We're sent out to get trade, and trade we must win.

It has been said, " If you're virtuous, then happy you'll be ; "
But be happy, and virtues will come to you free.
Just think these words over and see if I'm right ;
By doing for others, you can prove them true, quite.

'Tis not hard to describe a real, first-class " C. T. ",
I've known them so long I can e'en almost see
With my eyes shut, their worth, though they say not a word,
For a really first-class one is seen, and not heard.

I know people say, " They can talk very glib, "
And that truth is no better to them than a " fib ; "
But don't you believe it ; for the truth is to them
More sacred than 'tis to the average man.

No class in the world are more gen'rous than they ;
They'll divide their last cent, never thinking of pay ;
If they find one in trouble, they are first to give aid,
Never asking return for the sacrifice made.

They are noble, and honest, true-hearted, and brave ;
Pure-minded and tender, and always will save
For the " dear ones at home " the best things of this life,
Such as love, sweet affection, gentle words (without strife).

They are often accused of being ready to flirt
With every lady they meet, and think it no hurt ;
But 'tis false, every word ; for their love is too strong
For the wife whom they honor, to have thought of wrong.

From the time he leaves home on the first of the week
Until Saturday night, a "C. T." only seeks
To do his whole duty, and never forgets
The "Good-Bye" that was said at the door, with regrets.

Don't think by my words that their life is all sad ;
For they meet, every day, those who make their heart glad.
No class in the world have more friends on their list,—
No class when they die are more thoroughly missed.

An old adage has said "There's no friendship in trade ;"
But some of the truest that ever were made
Are between these same Trav'lers, who carry a Grip,
And the Merchants they sell, when they're round on their trip.

When you deal with a man, finding year after year
That he's upright and honest, square-toed and sincere,
A friendship arises that time won't efface ;
And we always are glad when we get to his "place."

Then away with reproaches 'gainst "Trav'ling men ;"
It's because you don't know them ; and I assure you that when
They have made their last "Trip," and St. Peter they meet,
He'll say, "Just hand me your Grip ; take the best reserved seat."

THE GOOD-NIGHT KISS.

A T close of day, when hearts are tired,
And things have gone amiss,
How much 'twill lighten all your load,
To give the good-night kiss.

The world is full of care and toil,
And yet we oft find rest
In what seem things of little worth,
But really are the best.

'Twas many, many years ago
Our first dear baby came ;
Three more were later sent to us,
We loved them all the same.

And every night when bed-time came,
Each one expected this :
From father and from mother too,
The parting, good-night kiss.

And when our dear ones went from home,
How much our hearts did miss ;
When evening came, and lights were low,
That tender, good-night kiss.

Discouragements, vexations too,
May often make us weak,
But oh ! what strength it often gives,
To press a childish cheek ;

E'en though your loved one wander far
From duty and from right,
Let hearts be warm and love be strong,
When God brings down the night.

And when we're through with earthly life,
And go where all is bliss,
I'm sure we will not be denied
Our children's good-night kiss.

MY WIFE'S BIRTHDAY.

YOUR birthday has come, my dear, good wife,
Like others that came and went ;
Yet each brings us nearer the end of life,
And shows one more year has been spent.

Fifty years since you first coo'd your welcome to earth,
Fifty years since you first saw the light,
Fifty years since the Angels first sang of your birth,
Fifty years have all gone from your sight.

Though our lives are not reckoned by years, but by deeds,
And our days by the good that we do ;
It may be we only can sow the good seeds ;
While the future, the harvest will show.

But regret not, my dear, that these years have gone by,
For each one has some credit to you ;
'Tis God keeps the books, none other need try,
Good deeds on your page are not few.

Like mile posts, to mark life's great highway
Are these days that remind us of birth ;
That we may look back, and year by year,
See what we have really been worth.

For every life, be it long, or if only a day,
To some soul adds new beauty to earth.
It may fill it with sunshine, or shed but a ray ;
Yet when gone, in its place leaves a dearth.

Some lives may seem to be filled with great deeds,
While others seem humble and small ;
But God knows best, what each life needs,
And he knows the real worth of us all.

You have never seemed anxious to leave a great name,
Nor to gain the world's plaudits and praise ;
You ne'er seemed to crave empty honors, and fame,
Nor to travel in high sounding ways.

Yet methinks when you've finished your work in this life,
And are ready to enter another,
Four words can be written : the first are " True Wife,"
The next, no less golden, " True Mother."

And those words are more precious than honor or fame,
More worthy than praise to be sought,
No title so sacred as " Mother : " no name,
No honor, like that can be bought.

For your home you have done all a mother can do,
Not by precept alone have you taught,
Your example has always been noble and true,
In love's own quiet ways have you wrought.

And as years come and go, may your children give back
All your love, and affection, ten fold ;
Of kindness and care may you ne'er feel a lack,
And ne'er feel what it is to " Grow Old."

For age is not marked by the years that we live,
Neither " Worth " by amount of our money ;
And one old in years may be young as a child,
If their heart be as cheerful and sunny.

When I first saw your face, it was girlish and fair,
Your cheeks were like roses in June,
Your step like a fairy, and light as the air,
Your eyes, danced as harp strings, in tune.

When I asked for your hand, and the promise you gave,
No diamond was mine to bestow ;
But I gave you my love, and I gave you my heart,
That to yours they might ever be true.

Not that life has been sunshine with never a cloud,
For to mortals, such life is not given ;
But our love has ne'er failed, and with years has grown strong,
Oft giving true glimpses of Heaven.

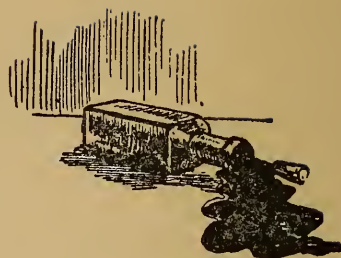
Then to-day, let us pledge to each other anew,
Our love, our devotion, our life ;
And I'll strive all the years to be worthy and true,
As I know you will be, as a wife.

And as mile posts appear, and the last one we near,
God grant we may walk side by side ;
And when nearing the shore, and our birthdays are o'er,
May you still be my sweetheart, and bride.

OUR BABY.

SAY! Have you seen our nice boy baby?
I'm sure you'd think him just a "dandy."
He is not yet quite two years old,
And he's just as sweet as sugar candy.

To others he may not seem so sweet,
Nor seem to them so great a blessing ;
But really he is such a joy —
(There ! He has my new shoe dressing !)



We think him just a little angel
Without a single virtue lacking ;
He's always been so good and wise,
(Just look ! His mother's face he's blacking !)

He comes into my study often,
So quiet you could hear a whisper ;
He climbs up on my lap, and then
(He's pouring blacking on his sister !)

And then his boyish baby talk ;
How it with love does always thrill me,
I feel that Heaven is not far off
(Let go my hair, or you will surely kill me.)

Come baby dear, come here and see me,
Come give your papa just one kiss
(Ouch ! Don't lay that flat-iron on my hand !
'Tis plenty hot enough to siss !)

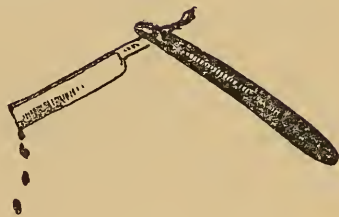
Now darling, run out doors and caper,
Stay near the house for fear of showers,
You're just the nicest little creature
(Great Scott ! He's pulling up those flowers !)

I wonder if he really came from Heaven ?

I would not think they'd let him pass,
For I am sure they all must miss him
(He's thrown a stone right through that twenty dollar glass.)

Some day I'm sure he'll be a "Lincoln,"
And all the world will set ablaze ; or
May be business he will follow
(Good heavens ! Where did he get that razor ?)

How people live that have no babies
I really can't get through my head ;
(There, wife ! He's gashed his finger,
Do take that baby off to bed.)



A DUET OF DREAMS.

A DEACON, in his pew at church, one Sunday evening sat,
His prayer book clasped within his hands, his hymnal in his lap ;
The offering had been taken up ; the Deacon on the plate
Had placed a nice five dollar note, and then put on its mate.

His face a stern expression wore, his features, hard and cold
Like one that "Hews close to the line," when gath'ring in his gold ;
"Self-satisfied" was plainly marked, and the thought came to him
then,
"O Lord, I truly thank Thee that I am not as other men."

Behind him sat a girlish form, her face looked old, yet young,
Her eyes were full of pathos deep, like that by poets sung,
Her figure slight, yet showed too plain that work, denial, toil,
Had each and all contributed, to form and beauty spoil.

The plate to her was also passed ; with shy and modest mein
She laid five pennies down, beside the Deacon's bills of green,
And in her heart arose the prayer so often prayed before :
" O Lord, Thou knowest if I could, I'd gladly give much more."

The choir then sang, " To Thee O God, we give our life, our all."
The Minister gave out his text, 'twas taken from " St. Paul."
It read, " Who will give unto every man, according to his deeds."
The Deacon (with the girl in mind) thought, "'Tis exactly what she
needs."

" Remember friends," the Preacher said, "'Tis God who is our Judge,"
(The Deacon moved up to his wife, and gave a quiet nudge.)
"And 'tis of him who hath great wealth, that much is here required,
The widow's mite more precious is, than " (The Deacon, then looked
tired.)

" The Lord is good," the Preacher said, " His love embraces all ;
His Son was sent to save the world, His voice shall ever call
Until the last dear sheep is in the fold ; entreaties will not cease ;
The gates of Heaven wide open are ; come, find sweet rest, and peace."

The Deacon had a troubled look, but Ruth an Angel seemed,
Such words of love, and comfort too, she ne'er had even dreamed ;
Her eyes were filled with grateful tears, her breath came short, and fast,
A message full of love like this, for her,— a poor outcast ?

The Preacher reached his "Fourthly," and
 like preachers oft before
 Was not content to stop when done, but
 bent on saying more
 Went on to "Fifthly" and to "Sixth,"
 then backwards, did repeat :



(The Deacon, and the girl behind, had fallen fast asleep.)

In dreams they both went up to Heaven, and stood before the gate ;
 St. Peter was in front thereof, to listen, and to wait ;
 The Deacon was surprised indeed : the gates were both ajar !
 He could hardly wait to ask the Saint, why he opened them so far ?

And he said, " My brother Peter, you should more careful be ;
 There may be those that come up here, who are not as good as me :
 I'd close the gates, and lock them, too, else why the keys you're given ?"
 St. Peter softly smiled, and said " This is not a private Heaven."

" You'll remember that your Bible read " (the Deacon gave a nod),
 " No power can ever separate, from the great, strong will, of God."
 " I will draw all men unto me " and " Every knee shall bow."
 " I have not time to quote you more, this will have to do for now."

" I'll walk right in," the Deacon spoke ; " Oh, No !" St. Peter said,
 " Some questions I will ask you first, about the life you led.
 Did you the cup of water give ? Did you the poor relieve ?
 When outcasts came to you for help, did you kindly them receive ?"

"I was a Deacon, Sir, on earth. To church I always went,
I always paid as much or more than others ; but I never spent
My money for the poor, unless I first found out
That they were good, and worthy too, and there must be no doubt.

"I remember well of Widow Jones, who came to me one day,
And with a look of sorrow asked, 'Would you my rent please pay
For just one month? My boy is sick ; my little Ruth is too ;
The landlord says he will not wait, for rent so long past due.'

"I said to her, 'No, madam, No ! Your rent I cannot pay.
Your life has not been what it should. Your boy once ran away.
Your husband too, when here alive, spent much more than he should ;
I'd like so much to help you, but I know 'twould do no good.' "

The Deacon stopped, then eyed the gate ; expecting to be told
To hurry in, and take the street that's paved with pearls and gold.
But St. Peter said, "Now, Deacon, I cannot break the rule,
I'll let you in ; but you must take a course in our preparatory school."

The Deacon, speechless, then withdrew, but stopped within the gate
To hear what might be said outside, and learn the poor girl's fate ;
He wondered, if all through his life, he'd missed the end he'd sought,
For he had truly tried to live, the life his "Creed" had taught.

The girl had stood with downcast air, and heard what had been said ;
She raised her eyes (St. Peter saw), and surely would have fled
Had not the Preacher's words that eve, " His love embraces all,"
Come to her mind, and then those too, " His voice shall ever call."

“Now, Dear (St. Peter then spoke up), come tell me what you can
Of all the good you did below. You must have heard the man
Who just went in, relate his life ; so 'twill the easier be ;
Don't be afraid to tell me all, come stand up close to me.”

Her face lit up with confidence, St. Peter looked so kind :
She took his hand in innocence ; and then she tried to find
Words in which to tell her life, but not a deed could bring
To mind, and softly said, “O ! St. Peter, I have not done a thing.”

“My mother died when I was young, (I then was only twelve),
And nearly all I've done since then, was just to toil, and delve ;
My father, he was kind to me, but sickly, and not strong,
I could not even go to church, that must have been so wrong.

“I had a sister, and a brother too, but they were very small ;
It took me nearly all the time to do the work for all ;
I know I ought to gone to church, I ought to have been good ;
The Deacon used to tell me this, I ought to understood.

“But when it came o' Sunday, I really could not leave,
For I always stayed with father, his troubles to relieve.
And week days, then I had to brew, and bake, and work, and sew ;
I should have been a better girl, I really should, I know.

“And when I reached eighteen ('twas here St. Peter saw her blush),
I fell in love with Jimmie Burns (this caused a moment's hush) ;
I really could not help it ; he was so good and kind,
He was the only friend I had, that I can call to mind.

"But people said 'twas scandalous, so young a girl as I
To think of loving any man.' It seemed to me I'd die
For they said other things much worse, but not a word was true ;
Perhaps I ought not tell you this ; but I don't seem 'fraid of you."

"Dear girl (the Saint spoke tenderly), you're not the first I've seen
Whose life by gossips has been harmed, and sometimes ruined been ;
But we keep books up here by truth ; and not what people say,
Our motto here is, Faith, and Hope, with love's sweet Charity."

The tears were in St. Peter's eyes, he turned his head away,
But quickly cleared his voice, and then unto the girl did say :
"He will render unto every man, according to his deeds.
Please hurry in, our angel choir a girl just like you needs."

She gave a thankful, happy cry, it woke her from her sleep,
It woke the Deacon too at once, from slumber that was deep ;
The Preacher's "Lastly" had been given, the hymn was read to close
"Praise God from whom all blessings flow," the congregation rose.

The Deacon and the girl passed out, as likewise did the rest,
The Deacon softly spoke to her, and in her hand he pressed
Two new ten dollar bills of green ; "Don't ever tell," he said,
"Where we have been since church began." (Her cheeks turned rosy
red.)

The Deacon had a lesson learned, and one he ne'er forgot ;
And ever after, through his life, if one he found whose lot
Was hard, and whom the world did scorn, he bountifully gave ;
"Because," said he, "the more I give, the more happiness I save."

The girl had also learned to feel, the world was not all woe,
That no class held all good and true, however high or low ;
For the Deacon's folks and Ruth, the girl, ever after were strong friends,
And for their errors of the past, both tried to make amends.

BUT GOD, HE UNDERSTOOD.

I WONDER, as I see the new born babe
Nestled on its mother's breast ; or in its cradle laid ;
What gave it life ? Who gave it breath ?
Whence came it from ? Whence after death ?

Why was it sent to suffer and to live ?
How can it repay the care ? And what has it to give ?
Would it not been better that it never came at all ?
Who knows if it a blessing be ; or what may it befall ?

But days go by ; and as I watch its each unfolding grace,
The love-light in its eyes, the angel molded face,
The new found bliss of father, and the mother's pure, sweet love ;
I see then why 'twas sent to earth ; I know 'twas "from above."

And in my heart there comes this thought ;
'Twas sent here for our good ;
Our greatest need we did not know ;
But God has understood.

I wonder, as I see some soul bowed down with care and grief,
Why all this pain and sorrow? Why not some quick relief?
Why are we born to suffer? Why need we toil and spin?
Why are there disappointments? Why can't we always win?

But days go by ; and as I watch this soul that once rebelled,
I see it lean to better thoughts, by holier ties 'tis held ;
Its love and patience have increased ; sweet charity has grown,
And thoughts that once were dark and cold have surely, gently flown.

And in my heart there comes this thought ;
'Twas only for its good ;
Its greatest need it did not know ;
But God, He understood.

I wonder, as I see some friend asleep in what seems death,
The lustre from the eye gone out, the lack of pulse and breath ;
Why need God taken them away? Why need He left us sad?
Why need He leave us thus alone, when with them we were glad?

But days go by ; and as I watch the influence left behind,
And hear the words of deep pure love, so gently said, and kind ;
'Tis then I know there is no death ; but newer, purer life,
No loneliness nor partings there, no heart aches, tears nor strife.

Then comes into my heart this thought ;
'Twas only for our good ;
Our greatest need we did not know ;
But God, He understood.

I wonder, as I think of Christ as being crucified ;
Why need He to have suffered thus ? Why need He to have died ?
Why could He not have stayed on earth, to teach us how to live ?
Why did He seem so willing His life, His all, to give ?

But days go by ; and as I see the greatness of His power,
The beauty of His life and love increasing every hour ;
There comes into my heart this thought : 'twas only for our good ;
Our greatest needs we do not know ; but God has understood.

REVERIES.

IN our cottage by the river, this quiet Sabbath day,
Looking out on the cool, clear water, where wind and ripples play,
There comes a sense of sadness ; and I dream of the " Long ago ; "
I listen, and hear sweet voices, that whisper soft and low.

I seem to be a boy again, and play with bare, brown feet
Down by the brook, near the " Dear old home," where flowers grew
wild and sweet,

I lie in the shade, by the big old elm, on the sweet, green, velvet
grass ;

I toss the sticks on the water's crest, and watch them as they pass.

I hear the lowing of the cattle, and the singing of the birds ;
It seems 'twas sweeter music than was ever set to words ;
I hear the horses neighing, and wonder what they said ;
Such things may now seem wondrous strange, that filled my boyish
head.

I hear my father's voice again, as real as though 'twas true ;
Perhaps from Heaven he's speaking (Oh, how I wish I knew) ;
For I am yet his " Little boy," and he my father dear ;
Could I but always feel his hand, how little need I fear.

I hear my mother gently speak, and see her young, sweet face,
(The years have made it sweeter still, more beautiful with grace ;)
My brother, and my sisters, too, I see as children small ;
O ! Could this dream be only true, how happy we'd be all.

I see the girls and boys at play, near the school-house on the hill,
And hear them shout in childish glee, " Let's go to the old saw-mill."
How scattered now those same dear ones ; North, South, East and
West ;
While some have gone to that " better land " where children are loved
best.

How well do I remember, as I looked in the water then,
Of the dreams I dreamed, and the things I saw, not for boys, but for
great big men.
And I longed for the time when I'd be a man, that those dreams might
all come true.
Ah ! How little I thought of the cares that would come ; how little of
this I knew.

Not that cares have outnumbered the blessings,
Nor of favors I need to ask more ;
For with each care that the years have since brought me,
God has sent me of blessings a score.

These are only "Sweet dreams of my childhood,"
They are dreams that can never come true ;
For like water that flows in the river,
We but once can the same water view.

A BUSINESS MAN'S VACATION.

OF all things in this world, the greatest "Fakes"
Are a business man's vacations, which he takes
Well knowing he'll not get a minute's rest,
But only 'cause fashion says, "'Tis best."
Eleven months like a galley slave he works ;
While in his head the foolish notion lurks
That when they're o'er, the other month he'll spend
Trying his health, his strength, and nerves to mend.

And oft it is, the last month of the eleven,
He feels himself but just one step from Heaven ;
For foolishly he reasons to himself like this : —
"Next month will be filled with almost perfect bliss ;
No work, no care, no business on my hands ;
I'll simply just exist, and thus will stop the sands
Of time from running out my glass ;
The weeks like days, and days like minutes all will pass."

Poor foolish man ! how many times you've reasoned thus,
 And then found out the same's before ; 'twas only fuss,
 And work, and worry, and no end of little things
 To do, the time for which your blest (?) vacation brings.
 E'en before your last week's work is done,
 Your wife, and those at home, have had great fun
 In planning at least three months of work
 For your vacation. (How these lines do jerk.)

" A chair to mend ; " " A castor's lost from off the bed ; "
 " The lawn to mow " (a naughty word can now be said) ;
 " Those carpets must be taken up and whipped ; "
 " Tomato vines must be propped up and clipped ; "
 " The peas need bushing ('twill only take you half an hour) ; "
 " The garden should be hoed (please now don't look so sour) ; "
 " The kitchen floor, it really needs a coat of paint ;
 I know 'twas done last spring, but the color is so faint."

A thousand other things you learn must all be done
 Before your days of rest (?) can be begun ;
 You're told " 'twill only take a little while
 To do these things, and really they will 'spile '
 If not attended to at once," and so
 You search the house, both high and low,
 To find a hammer, saw, and other tools,
 Not one of which are there ('twould be against the rules.)

Hour after hour in hunting these is spent ;
Then all at once your wife says, " Oh ! I lent
Them tools to Aunt Sally Jones last week."
(Your wrath is such you do not dare to speak.)
You start at once to interview " Aunt Sal,"
Who, after thinking half an hour or so, says, " Wall,—
Now — really — with them borrowed things I ain't ha'f dun,
When I git thru, I'll bring 'em rite strate hum."

At last you get to work, and wonder why
'Twas given to woman only, and not to man to cry ;
For well you know, that you can never do
One-half the things before your month is through.
Next morning you get up and dress, at four ;
Listen to hear your wife and children (bless them) snore ;
Steal down the stairs, lest from their sleep they wake ;
Then from a small black bottle drink (just for the stomach's sake.)

And then you toil, and toil, day in, day out ;
Ripping up the carpets, and throwing things about
Until, in sheer despair, you say to wife,
" We'll go somewhere and rest, and end this strife."
When where to go, and when, each one is asked to tell ;
And each one talks and talks, until you — well,
You wish you were in Hades, or some warmer clime,
For no two think alike regarding place, or time.

But all things earthly must begin, and end ;
The time is fixed, and place agreed upon to spend
The ten days left you e'er your time is up.
That night you dream that happiness has filled your cup ;
And 'tis but a dream ; for, ere 'tis one half o'er,
Your wife awakes, and says, "'Tis after four ;
Get up ! 'tis time that we should start ;
Do stir yourself ; why won't you ever do your part ?"

The place where you're to stay is reached at last,
And then the trouble comes both thick, and fast :
"What room can I have ?" "Let me have this ;"
"I never have a room one-half as good as Sis ;"
"I won't in this place stay a single night ;"
"Where is the Landlord ? I feel that I could fight."
Each lays the blame and trouble all to "Pa,"
And says, "He never did know half as much as Ma."

Next day the oldest daughter says "Let's go
And climb the mountains ;" but next younger she says, "No !"
Who wants to wear their legs off going away up there
To get eat up by 'skitos, snakes, and bear ?"
The little boys, they both are crying, "Pa, let's go and fish ;"
The mother of them all says, "Now I wish
You folks would listen and hear just what I say,
Not one of you shall go, nor leave the house this day."

And thus the time is wasted, and made to be
Not filled with rest, but discontent, and misery ;
No single thing is right, and everything is wrong,
Else I had never been inspired to write this song.
Six days from out the ten is finally spent,
And then you start for home, your mind full bent
That never will you again leave what you know to be
The best place in the world, for an uncertainty.

Your "Old home " reached, looks better than it ever looked before,
The very air seems full of comfort, and every door
Swings open with a welcome you can feel and hear ;
While softly to yourself you say, " 'Tis mighty queer
That I never have known the beauty of this quiet place."
Down on your knees that night you get with Christian grace
And thinking of all that's good, and true, and best,
You pray, " O ! Lord, let me stay here three days and rest."

DAD'S VACATION.

BY MISS WILHELMENA STEARNS.

VACATION time for Pa has come, and we'll have fun, O ! my !
For this time comes but twice a year (in Winter and July).
I've planned so many things to do, now Pa's vacation's here,
And Ralph and Mama too, have some, too much I almost fear.

He has his horses here you know and every night "'tis fine,"
We'll take a great long ride for miles, and won't get home 'fore nine.
You see he's tired and weary, and so 'twill be so nice
To lie in bed in the morning, and sleep as snug as mice.

And then when breakfast is over, and the dishes are put away,
We'll lunch for dinner, and supper, and enjoy the whole long day ;
It is so much work to keep cooking, that bread of our baker we'll get ;
We'll buy cookies, and buns, and berries, and thus over eating won't
fret.

We'll go up in the " Woods " if we want to, and live at a big hotel,
Tho' we can't stay forever and ever, for a while we will live very swell.
If we find that at home we're contented, we'll do as I said before
Just eat, sleep and be merry, then eat, sleep and be merry some more.

If we want we can stay at the boat-house, that stands near the big
old oak ;
And tho' the rest never did it, we'll let Papa just smoke, and smoke.
We'll lie in the hammock and rest us, or sit in the big swing-chair,
Or float in our boat on the river, and have neither worry nor care.

We'll stay at home if we want to, and lock all the doors, two and
three,
Then if the neighbors should call here, we won't be " at home," don't
you see ?
O ! I'm glad his vacation is coming, we'll all have a vacation too ;
And we'll all get so good and rested, we'll be toughened and well,
thro' and thro'.

And then when he starts on his trip, he'll feel like a brand new man,
He can travel, and travel, and travel, from here to "Beersheba and
Dan."

And Mama and Ralph'll be rested, and ready at beck or call
To turn the world over or under, with no exertion at all.

Yes, I'm glad, I'm glad as I can be
For everything great or small ;
But for this, my Papa's vacation
I'm the very gladdest of all.

VACATION'S OVER.

I'VE read over these lines and I'm crazy, to that I have made up
mind ;

What made me have such a delusion, I've tried, so hard to find,
I must have been sleeping, or dreaming, when I sat and penned down
these lines ;

I must have had sugar, and candy, or a "dream-bag" of gold from
the mines.

I wonder what made me so joyful ! what made me see things as I did !
What made me so vain and so foolish ! all sense from me must have
hid.

Yes we called it " my Papa's vacation " but neither he, Ralph, Mama
nor I,

Nor any one else I am thinking, can ever in this world tell why.

I supposed that "vacation" meant resting ; meant fun, and frolic, and peace ;

But "jolly" I was mistaken, I'll believe it 'til time shall cease.

I'm glad what they call "vacation," comes only twice in each year,
For if it came more we'd all perish ; to us, that seems very clear.

It has been just a "Get up, and get there" ever since this vacation began ;

(I always have thought so before this) now I know I don't want a man.

My goodness ! but ain't they just funny ? I believe it, and so will you, too,

If you'll wait 'bout an hour and five minutes, and just hear my sad story thro'.

Our meals have been "mixed up" and "mussed up ;" we have managed three every day,

But how in the "Dickens" we've done it, Mama'll have to, for I cannot say.

Our breakfast is ready at seven, or at the latest, half past ;

But since that "Vacation's" been here, we ain't been goin' so fast.

O ! yes, the meal has been ready each morn, very prompt, and on time ;

But Papa and breakfast are different, and exactly at ten we would dine ;

And dinner ? Well — yes, we have had some, it's most always served just at noon,

But lately since Papa has been here, even half after two was too soon.

Yes ! we have had what's most always called supper (we usually serve it 'bout dark),

But if lately we've had it 'fore seven, then listen ! I've missed the mark.

And who is to blame for this mix-up ? Well, really, I'm sure I can't tell, But I'm just as sure that we've had one, as tho' ther'd been shot and shell.

It seems that every one's waited, and saved all the business he had, And planned to make life miserable, while vacation lasted for Dad ; Folks have come to our house here to see him, at morning, at noon, and at night ;

'Til I'm sure that if I were my Papa, I'd put on my armor, and fight.

His horses have been here, O ! yes, just as I said they would be ; But instead of riding, and riding, we have done something else, don't you see ?

They had to be cleaned and tended ; their harness of course must be oiled ;

The wagons as usual were muddy ; the cushions and blankets were soiled.

These he has brushed and looked over, and hung them all back in their place ;

The barn he has swept, and dusted till you can almost see your face ; The farms are both let to tenants, who are good, respectable men, But they seem to need looking after, quite a big lot now and then.

And Lute, our rising young lawyer, our brother, and friend and son,
Seems to need Pa's assistance quite often, in order to get all things
done ;

And Harry and May are both boarding (they come every summer to
stay),

They both seem to get well and rested, and enjoy each and every day.

But some way or other my Papa seems to have a heap more to do,
For when Harry and May have left us he's all tired out thro' and thro'.
Do you think that I've told the "whole business ;"—all the things
that my Papa has done ?

If you do you're a whole lot mistaken, for besides there's a thousand
and one.

And now his vacation is over, and tomorrow he starts "on the Road,"
To sell his "Boots, shoes and rubbers," of which, samples he takes in
his load ;

I guess he is glad it is over, for though each and all tried their best,
I'm sure when he gets to travelling, he can't help but find it more
rest.

And perhaps when he's gone on his journey, and neighbors and
boarders clear out,

May be that we, too, will get rested, and things will again "right
about ;"

And then we will all get recruited, the fathers, and daughters, and
sons,

So that we may be able to stand it, when my Papa's next 'Cation
comes.

MY MOTHER.

MY Mother ! At the very name
My heart bows low in loving adoration.
None else can ever be the same,
As she who bears this sweet relation.

Long ere I e'en could lisp your name,
Or give one sign of recognition,
Your tender care, and soft, sweet words
Had blest, and taught me love's fruition.

How oft, when I was but a lad,
I came with throbbing head or troubled heart,
And one caress of your soft hand
Made pain and sorrow both depart.

In later years when I had grown
To be the awkward, clumsy boy,
One word of sweet encouragement
Turned all my troubles into joy.

I know full well how in those years
I often made your heart grow sad ;
Yet not for lack of filial love,
Nor yet that I was really bad.

I know that I your patience tried
With boyish pranks and thoughtless deeds ;
Yet love for you I never lacked,
E'en though the "grain" was mixed with "weeds."

Thro' all the years since manhood came
Affection toward you has grown strong,
To worthy be of Mother's love,
Has kept me free from many a wrong.

No honor have I ever craved ;
Nor plaudits from the world have yearned,
So much as Mother's words "Well done,"
And know that they were fairly earned.

And when from busy toil I've found
An hour to spend for your sweet sake,
This thought has been my great reward,
That I could you the happier make.

In years you have grown old, and weak,
The four score mark you've left behind,
Your hair is gray, yet when you speak
Your voice is wonderfully kind.

When hearts are warm, age does not tell,
'Tis but the good in you I see,
To me you are the same dear soul
As when you held me on your knee.

And when the close of life I near,
And look to Heaven for peace and joy ;
I know your angel face I'll see,
And hear you call your " Baby boy."

WE'VE GOT COMP'NY.

SAY! We've got comp'ny ;
They come from " way out West,"
They live in Minnesoty,
Where wheat crops is the best.

They're on their way to " Old Varmount,"
Where " The Girl " she used to live ;
They thought they'd just stop off a spell,
And us a visit give.

" Who are they ? " did you say ?
Now I 'most fergot to tell ;
The feller, he's a nephew, and cousin ;
And a grandson too, as well.

He use' to live here. See —
That was thirteen years ago ;
Lived with Granma, and Auntie ;
(That's my mother, and sister you know.)

“The Girl?” Oh! her name’s Phebe;
And say, she’s awful small;
But you bet that feller loves her
As though she was ten feet tall.

“Married?” Oh! my, yes,
Been married more’n a year;
No, they didn’t marry for money,
Just “Old fashion love” (ain’t that queer?)

“Buffalo Lake?” Yes, that’s their home,
And a nice young village too;
Guess they’d be happy though
If they lived in a “Bungalow.”

“Like ’em?” Course we like ’em,
They’re just ’bout same’s our own;
Can’t know sech folks ’s them long
’Fore into your heart they’ve grown.

Oh, yes! The feller’s mother;
I just want to speak o’ her,
She was prob’ly the sweetest sister ever —
But say! She moved off too fer.

Ever since she went and married,
(An that’s more’n thirty year ago,)
’T seems jus’ so I’d lost a piece o’ myself,
And couldn’t a new piece grow.

Yes ! We're glad they've been here,
We're glad they've been to stay ;
Sech things make life worth livin',
They do, most cert'ny.

THE LOVES OF MY CHILDHOOD.

HOW sweet seem the loves of my childhood,
How simple, and trustful and true ;
As I dream of the past, and in fancy
Bring back all their faces to view.

First was little May Clara Derosia,—
At school in the same seat we sat,
Her pretty pink calico apron,
And her cheeks even pinker than that.

I felt that she must be an angel,
(Although at the time I was six),
And I promised her over and over
That with no other girls would I mix.

Then that little petite Alma Eldridge,—
She claimed my attention at seven ;
Her hair was as black as a raven ;
When with her, I seemed always in Heaven.

We always to school walked together,
Hand in hand we could always be seen ;
To her I swore endless devotion,
I thought her quite fit for a Queen.

Almeda Clarinda Montondo,—
It was she that I worshipped at eight ;
Together we ate all our luncheons,
For each other we always did wait.

At night I was always most careful
To carry her basket or pail ;
If another boy dared even offer,
I was ready that boy to assail.

At nine I met Marselleine Gillette,—
It was she that had hair like pure gold ;
I can see her sweet face as a vision,
E'en though I am fifty years old.

At twenty she married a doctor,
And made a most excellent wife ;
It seems but a year since I told her
That for her I would lay down my life.

May Stinson moved into our village,
Soon after my tenth year birthday ;
She came from way down in New Hampshire,
It seemed to me then, far away.

I felt when the first time I saw her,
As though my fate surely was sealed,
But her mother soon learned all about it,
And her thoughts very soon were revealed.

She told me that never ! no, never !
Could I play with May Stinson again,
That she thought me a " great big boy booby,"
And other things equally plain.

I shall never forget my emotion
As old Mrs. Stinson thus spoke,
She seemed of all women most cruel,
And I felt that my heart she had broke.

Years have come, and have gone, since those school days,
And I have grown wrinkled and gray,
But the innocent loves of my childhood
Seem fresh, like the sweet flowers of May.

And oft to my brain comes the wonder,
Why must we this innocence lose ?
Is happiness greater by leaving,
What then seemed like " Breath of a rose ? "

KINDNESS.

“**A**ND be ye kind,” our Savior has said ;
Words so simple, and plain, that to-night I am led
To take them as a text, for what I may say
On this subject of Kindness, from day to day.

How greatly this one word affects all our lives ;
It moves the whole world, and often it drives
All the sorrow out of a heart that is sad ;
For kindness ne’er fails to make the heart glad.

’Tis not “ Kindness ” when we for an enemy pray,
Unless we are good to them every day,
To show that we love them, as Jesus did ;
For love seldom fails to do as ’tis bid.

Yet how often we fail to do a kind deed ;
No matter how urgent, nor how great the need,
Just because we may feel that our friend has done wrong,
When perhaps their repentance has been earnest and long.

And to those that we love, we’re not always kind,
Though the saying tells us that “ Love is blind ; ”
We are apt to look at some fault or mistake,
Until we enlarge it, and a greater one make.

We are apt to forget in our hurry and strife,
That our Kindness may add so much to some life ;
Until 'tis too late, and our friend is no more,
Then our heart, full of kindness, wide, opens its door ;

And we think to ourselves, " Could we but for one day,
Have them know how we loved them ; " and just hear them say
That " We'd made them so happy ; " that " We were so kind ; "
But alas 'tis too late e'en this comfort to find.

How many poor souls by some influence made blind,
Can hardly tell good from evil, yet are wondrously kind ;
And often I think, if the Master were here,
It would be his first pleasure, their poor hearts to cheer.

" And be ye kind " was the Master's own word ;
Let us live as though we this message had heard,
Both for friend and for foe, this message was given,
And if heeded, would make of our world one great Heaven.

To those we think good, as well as to others,
Christ says " Be ye kind, for are ye not brothers ? "
" Love ye one another, even as I have loved you,
No greater commandment, I give unto you. "

AUNT KATE.

BEFORE the kitchen window sitting,
With fingers busy, busy knitting,
I oft have seen my dear Aunt Kate,
And then have loved to watch and wait.

Her dress (alpaca) smooth and black ;
Her apron (gingham) even check ;
Around her neck a soft, white ruff ;
Her hair combed smooth, no waves nor puff ;

Her face (to me) serene and sweet ;
This makes the picture quite complete.
As by the window, quiet sitting,
She deftly plies her needles, knitting.

I often wonder as you sit,
And smile so softly as you knit,
Of what your mind is busy thinking,
And why your eyes so fast are winking.

I wonder if your thoughts go back
To when your hair was wavy black ;
When bright your eyes, and pink your cheek,
And soft your voice whene'er you'd speak.

I wonder, as I see you smile,
If you're not thinking all the while
Of days when you were but a girl,
And some one called you "Dearest Pearl."

I wonder, did you ever dance,
While some one watched your every glance,—
And eyes to eyes returned sweet love,
Each feeling sure 'twas from "above."

I almost see that rosy blush
As round the room you glide, and rush
To get away (or just pretend)
From one who called you "Dearest Friend."

Yes I wonder, though I would not know ;
Such things are sacred, and should go
Through life, locked up in each dear heart
That knows, and feels, and acts the part.

No, I would not ask your heart to tell
Of things on which it loves to dwell ;
Of things though gone and long since past,
Yet still make pulse and heart beat fast.

Of these I would not if I could ;
I only wondered, as I stood
And watched the smiles, and visions flitting
Across your face, as you were knitting.

I only wondered, that was all,—
If voices from the past did call ;
If some one watched and now did wait
To welcome “ Home ” our dear Aunt Kate.

“ BOB ” BURNETT.

I WAS sitting one summer’s afternoon,
On a beautiful sea-side beach ;
The tide was going out, and the breaker’s line
Went as far as the eye could reach.

The surf and the spray like something alive,
Danced over the blue water’s crest ;
And then it was gone, and seemed to hide,
Like a child that was seeking for rest.

The bathers came down to the water’s edge
In costumes both varied and gay ;
And took their first dip, ere they ventured out
In the deep, cooler waters to play.

All seemed to be happy, and many a laugh
Rang out o’er the deep, blue sea ; —
In the distance there lay a fisher’s craft,
Tossing light, as it lay in the lee.

In this frail, light craft was "Bob" Burnett,
A fisherman, old and brown ;
He had fished in this bay for many a year,
And was a friend of all in the town.

The day had been bright, and the wind was fair,
The beach was spread out like a sheen ; —
But hark ! From the west came a long, deep roar,
And a lightning's flash is seen.

Then, faster and faster the thickening clouds
Seemed to gather in darkness like night ;
Like the hosts of an army, in one grand array,
All prepared for a long, bitter fight.

The heavens grew black and blacker still ;
The lightning like serpents did hiss ;
The wind had increased with a mighty force
As though the battle it must not miss.

The rain in torrents began to descend ;
While the lightning lit up the whole sky ;
The storm demon seemed in a frenzy to be,
And his power without mercy to try.

The bathers retreated with hasty steps,
And their faces were blanched with fright ; —
For a "cyclone" makes many a strong man weak,
When it comes in its fury and might.

“But look!” said a villager; “Look at Bob Burnett!
He is still far out in the bay;
He will surely be lost, for he seems not to know
Of the tempest that’s moving that way.”

“Why don’t he row in! He seems not to move!
Come in, Bob Burnett! Bob! Halloo!”
But the storm in its fury seemed little to care,
Whether Bob was in danger, or no.

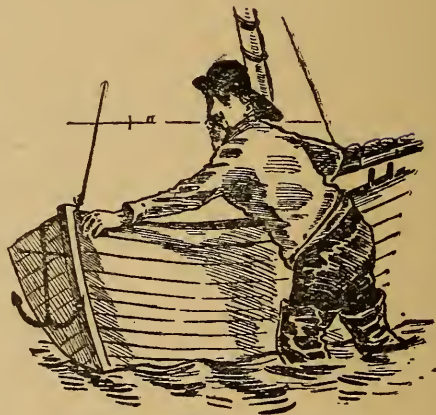
The darkness increased; no boat could be seen;
And the village gave Bob up for lost,
For surely he could not have rowed in to shore,
While the bay by the tempest was tossed.

But the tempest and storm spent its fury and strength;
And the ocean lay calm and serene;
And out in the bay, as before the storm came,
Bob Burnett and his boat could be seen.

He rowed in to shore, and seemed not to
know

That a terrible peril was past;
“Why did you stay out?” and “Why
not row in?”
And a score of such questions were asked.

But Bob only smiled, as the questions he
heard,
And one answer he gave, first and last;



“ The storm came too sudden ; I could not row in ;
So my trusty old anchor I cast.”

“ And all through the storm I felt sure and safe,
For the anchor has held me before ;
A storm cannot harm, with your anchor secure,
In a bay, not too far from lee shore.”

A lesson I learned from this fisherman old,
And 'tis one which I'll never forget ;
At the worries, the cares, and the storms of this life,
It makes it no better to fret.

But an anchor we need on which to depend ;
Let it be “ Faith in God and in man,”
Deep rooted and firm, like a rock never moved,
With strong trust in the Father's great plan.

Then the troubles and trials may seem to engulf,
And the storms in their fury may sweep ;
But like Bob Burnett, let your anchor be cast,
And you'll safely your journey complete.

SISTER.

THE soft wind blows across your grave,
The stars in silence shed their light,
We speak your name, no answer comes
To tell us where you are to-night.

“No answer,” did I say, “came back?”
 Forgive. A thousand answers came;
We hear them in each kindly thought,
 Those treasures which our hearts contain.

We hear the answer in your life;
 The loving deed, the soft, kind word;
For yours was not to ask applause,
 ’Twas not to have your virtues heard.

Your life was full of toil and care;
 Yet never did your heart repine;
To do for others was your lot,
 And always seemed life’s choicest wine.

If sin, you ever did commit,
 I know some angel did efface,
With tears, the writing on the “Page,”
 And wrote “Forgiveness” in its place.

Near where you rest, the song bird trills;
 What music could there be more sweet?
Perhaps it reaches you in Heaven;
 And helps to make your song complete.

Around your headstone, ivy clings;
 Upon your grave the grass so green,
Seeming to touch, with loving hands
 The place, where carved, your name is seen.

And when the angel's "Twilight bell"
Rings out through Heaven's celestial dome,
We know full well your spirit hears,
And finds a place in God's own home.

Our voice speaks out a fond farewell,
But hearts can feel you ever near ;
For though our sight with tears may dim,
Love, ever holds your mem'ry dear.

JUST A COMMONPLACE, EVERYDAY MAN.

WE read of great heroes, who were bravest in battle,
And stood when all other men ran ;
Who carried the "Colors," while bugles were sounding
To "Retreat !" as a merciful plan ;
But the bands and the music, the cheers of their comrades,
Had enthused them, as only these can ;
While simple devotion to right, and to duty,
Cheers the commonplace, everyday man.

I have known of great statesmen, who moved even nations
By words that were eloquent, grand ;
And the whole world stood ready to laud and to crown them,
For taking so glorious a stand ;

Yet it took less pure goodness, and less of true manhood,
For the praise of a nation to fan,
Than it takes to be loyal to honest convictions,
When a commonplace, everyday man.

I have known of great artists in music, or painting,
Who the plaudits of millions have won
By the touch of a brush, or a sweet strain of music,
Which by them was so easily done ;
While no praise is the portion of thousands of others,
Who their charities spread like a span,
And are humbly content to receive just the title,
“A commonplace, everyday man.”

And methinks that true manhood is the noblest achievement
That mortal in this world can reach ;
It may not seem a great one, nor bring its possessor
Any beautiful figures of speech ;
But I think at the end, when life's labors are over,
And we know and can see God's great plan,
That the words of our Savior, “Well done,” will be spoken
To the commonplace, everyday man.

Then here's to the man, be he titled, or lowly,
Whose heart ever opens to need ;
Whose first and great thought is for home, and for country,
And who looks not for greatness, nor meed ;

Whose love for the world is ne'er changed by approval ;
Who is moved by no party nor clan ;
At the close of whose life may be written in honor —
“Just a commonplace, everyday man.”

THE LATEST JOKE.

“**H**AVE you heard the latest joke?”

A man I knew thus always spoke
When he had a crowd of two, or three or more ;
Then he'd start in, and relate
Some old yarn of ancient date,
And when finished, he himself would laugh and roar.

If the yarn was coarse and smutty,
Or insipid, soft as putty,
He expected every man to give applause ;
But with courage all undaunted,
(Though to leave, the whole crowd wanted,)
He would start in on another, without pause.

Fellow suff'ers ! Can you place him ?
If you do, next time you face him
Choke him off, before he gets his second breath ;
For he makes the whole world tired,
And we'll vote to have him “fired,”
'Fore he gets a chance to talk us all to death.

MY MOTHER-IN-LAW.

“**M**OTHER-IN-LAW?” Oh, yes, I have one,
And the name I must confess,
Makes me wish that I could change it
For one not so meaningless.

Well I know, that in the papers,
In the books and magazines,
One would think 'twas full of meaning,
And they all were evil's Queens.

Often when I read these stories,
Written by some husband too,
Comes into my mind this query :—
“Who gave life's great help to you?”

Was it not this ill-used woman,
Gave to you your own sweet wife?
And in this way you repay her,
For the dearest thing in life?

'Tis a shame for man or woman
Ever pictures thus to draw ;
Showing one of earth's best treasures
As a hated mother-in-law.

Yes, I have one. May God bless her ;
None are better in the land ;
She it was who gave her blessing
When I asked her daughter's hand.

Always gentle, kind, forbearing,
Always self-possessed, content ;
From my heart I call her Mother ;
Caring not the laws intent.

Years ago, called home to Heaven,
Was her husband, helper, stay ;
Yet she wrought for home and children ;
Yet pursued her peaceful way.

Never pining, ne'er complaining,
Thanking God for blessings sent ;
Not by precept only teaching,
But by sweet encouragement.

In my mind I often see her,
Like some placid lake at rest ;
Face as radiant as an angel's,
Mirror of her soul so blest.

Do you wonder that I love her ?
Do you wonder I detest
Any name for her but " Mother,"
Name of all, the dearest, best ?

BROTHER'S LONG TAILED-COAT.

WHEN the cares of life are weighty, and I bend beneath their load ;

When happiness seems to leave me, and I climb an up-hill road ;
When I hear some man complaining, wishing back his boyhood days ;
And all the joys of present life, seem darkened by a haze ;
'Tis then a thought steals o'er me (and often makes me smile),
Of the days when I was but a lad, and yearned to be " in style " ;
And there's nothing now that makes me feel so much like a billy goat,
As I did when I was obliged to wear my brother's long-tailed coat.

My brother was my senior, by some ten years or more ;
The eldest of the children (they only numbered four) ;
He was taller too, and stouter built, his years would that denote,
For when I was but eleven, he was old enough to vote.
My father, of this world's goods, had only a very few,
And younger boys, in those old days, had little that was new.
So my brother, when away to school, a letter like this, wrote : —
" I'll send to-day (for Bub to wear) my black cloth, long-tailed coat."

The coat arrived ; I tried it on ; then found a looking glass ;
I'll ne'er forget just how I felt, for I looked as green as grass.
There was cloth enough, and some to spare, to make for me two coats ;
There was room enough in each long sleeve, to put a bag of oats ;
While down the back it lay in folds, and when I tried to walk,
It looked just like a night-gown hung over a mullen stock.

Oh ! Yes ; I often hear my friends on days of childhood dote ;
But they give to me the nightmare, when I think of that long-tailed
coat.

It came below my knees a foot ; my hands it covered up ;
The pockets I could scarcely reach ; and our young brindle pup
Began to bark like all possessed, when first he saw me wear it ;
I wished with all my boyish heart, from top to hem he'd tear it.
But Mother said " You look real nice," (poor woman I forgave her),
For if I wore that coat as 'twas, a lot of work 'twould save her.
So all my folks seemed to agree, and to my brother wrote : —
" We think it just the thing for Bub, your black cloth, long-tailed coat.

First place I wore it, was to church ; (I then sang
in the choir),
In walking to the " singers' seat," I thought I
should expire ;
I felt that every eye in church was looking right
at me ;
Before my eyes came such a blur that I could
hardly see.

The minister gave out the hymn (my sister
next me sat) ;

The choir arose, I tried to sing, — my voice was three notes flat.
The congregation all looked 'round, my brain was all afloat ;
I prayed the earth to swallow me, with brother's long-tailed coat.

Long years have passed since that occurred ; my hair is turning gray ;
Defeats and trials I have known, pursuits that did not pay ;



But nothing ever gave me pain, and made me feel so sore,
As wearing that old long-tail coat my brother had before.
And when I hear old people talk of "Happy childhood days,"
I simply snicker (to myself) and take a backward gaze,
And see myself stand up to sing, and couldn't sound a note,
For I knew that every eye in church was on that long-tailed coat.

MY WIFE HAS BEEN AWAY.

MY wife has been away, "Down East,"
She stayed there five long weeks, at least ;
She's coming home again to-day,
She's coming home, Hooray ! Hooray !

I wonder, if while she's been gone,
The world has really all went wrong ;
Or is it only just with me,
That things all seemed to go "Skew Gee."

When first she spoke of going away,
I said, "Oh ! Yes ; I sure would stay
At least two months, and maybe more ;
You really should have gone before."

But as time neared for her to go,
Things kind o' lonely seemed to grow ;
And when I saw her pack her trunk,
My throat, of lead, contained a chunk.

And when I said to her, "Good-bye,"
I tried to laugh ; I don't know why,
But laughing seemed quite hard that day ;
And words seemed long, and hard to say.

And when I saw that she was gone,
And I was standing there alone,
The world seemed just ten times as big,
And my old self "Not worth a fig."

The house seemed larger than a barn ;
I did not seem to care a "Darn"
For funny things ; and so I went
And for cigars, my money spent.

I said unto myself like this :—
"I'll smoke, and smoke, in perfect bliss ;"
Then lit a nice, clean, fresh cigar,
Put up my feet, tipped back my chair.



"Now I can solid comfort take ;
Of course she's gone, but then I'll make
More fun you'll see, while she's away,
Than I have made for many a day."

And then I just began to laugh ;
But ere that laugh was finished half,
My heart was heavy as a stone ;
I thought, "when will that girl come home?"

And every time the smoke I'd puff,
I'd have to wipe my nose, and snuff;
And when the wreaths would rise in space,
In them I'd see her very face.

The dog came in and looked, then whined;
I knew 'twas her he tried to find;
I knew 'twas her the whole world missed;
Her photo then I found, and kissed.

I said, "I'll go and take a ride;"
But ere my horse was half untied,
The thought again came, "she is gone;
And if I go 'twill be alone."

I really think the old black mare
Felt lonesome, and wondered where
That woman was, with voice so soft,
Who'd fed and petted her so oft.

The very birds seemed each to say,
"Old man, where is your wife to-day?
I guess when she gets home again
You won't to her be quite so mean."

And when to dinner down I sat,
And glanced across the table, at
The place where she had ought to be,
Well, really, I could hardly see.

The sun seemed only half as bright,
And three times darker seemed the night,
The days were long, the evenings,— well —
The length of them I could not tell.

But all these things were but as nought,
Compared to those when first I sought
The room we always call “Our own,”
And found that I was there alone.

The very windows, every door,
The very carpet on the floor,
The chairs, the pictures on the wall,
Each seemed to try her name to call.

One hair pin on the dresser lay ;
A little thing I know, but say :—
I thought it worth its weight in gold,
Though broken twice, and bent, and old.



A ribbon bow I spied just then ;
(She'd worn it at her neck), and when
I saw that wrinkled, faded thing,
I thought I'd “Boo Hoo,” so “By Jing.”

I know you'll say I was a fool ;
And that my wife you know can rule
Me with her little finger, when
She gets back here at home again.

Perhaps she will, and if she should,
I know she'll only make me good ;—
Just call on me some other day,
My wife has come ! Hooray ! Hooray !

DEATH OF McKINLEY.

(SEPT. 14, '01.)

“**M**CKINLEY is dead !” Like a flash of lightning came the shock ;
Men stop in their daily tasks ; e'en children cease their walks ;
Women with sorrow in their face, and tears in eyes repressed ;
The whole world mourns our nation's loss ; McKinley is at rest.

Like the fading of a summer zephyr, this great man breathed his last ;
Day by day, and hour by hour, he sank away, and fast
Yet faster grew the fluttering pulse, and dim the vital spark,
And now the journey's over, and shattered is life's bark.

His last words a benediction : “ 'Tis God's way, His will be done.”
'Twould seem that angels waited, to take his spirit “ Home ; ”
No thought of power, nor pomp, nor show, came from those lips so
dear,
But like some tired child, he simply slept, without one dread or fear.

McKinley dead. The assassin's bullet e'en so small,
O'er the whole nation casts a cloud, o'er every home a pall ;
But let us from his life cull all the good and true,
And thus it shall continue, by living it anew.

REVERIE OF AN OLD GRIP.

I AM an old, old Grip, I was bought in Eighty-one ;
The first my master ever owned, together we begun.
'Way up in the attic I have lain since Eighteen Ninety-two,
I've only gathered dust, and thought, with nothing else to do.

I wonder where my master is, why did he leave me here ?
Every time I think of him I shed a bitter tear ;
He used to be so good to me, so careful and so kind,
And Oh ! How he did want to swear when I was left behind.

He used to call me " Dear old Grip " and take me to his room,
He'd open me so carefully, and when a fit of gloom
Came over him as sometimes did, how gently he would take
A picture from my pocket, and what a fuss he'd make.

He'd hold that picture to his lips, and then he'd lay it down,
And twice I saw him drop some tears, that fell right on the gown
Of what I'm sure a baby wore, though I could hardly see,
For really I felt bad myself, 'cause he did not look at me.

Once when he turned the picture 'round I saw it very plain ;
It had the sweetest lady's face, a picture could contain ;
And there were children's faces too ; (I think 'twas three, or four,)
Oh ! How I wish he'd come up here and show them just once more.

I heard him say " My darling wife, how good you are, and true,
I love you better than my life, I wish you only knew :"
And then he looked again and said : " My own sweet little Pets,
Your father loves each one of you, and O ! so lonely gets."

He kissed the picture then once more, and looked me through again,
He found some paper and some ink, and then picked up a pen :
I'm sure he wrote an hour or more, and never spoke a word ;
His face looked happier after that, though why, I never heard.

It then I think was after dark, and Jack knelt by my side :
I heard him pray for home and friends, and for God's help to guide ;
He took the picture in his hand, and then turned out the light ;
I almost know I heard him say " Good-night, old Grip, good-night."

I'm sure this was in Gouverneur, and long before daylight
A man came running up the stairs, who seemed half dead with fright,
And screaming " Fire ! Get up here, Jack, the hotel's all afire,
Don't stop to dress, but save yourself from — Fire ! — Fire ! — Fire !"

Jack jumped from bed not half awake, and grabbed me in his hand,
He threw me out the window, not thinking where I'd land ;
I struck the curbstone with a crash, which almost broke my back,
But e'en for that I did not care, if only saved, was Jack.

I saw him out the window climb, and this gave me new heart ;
He seemed to get a glance of me, and then he gave a start :
I heard him say, " I must have that, I must at any cost :"
He turned about ; went back inside ; I gave him up for lost.

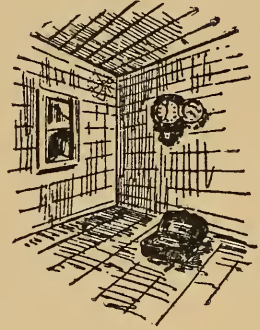
I knew that picture he had left where every night it laid ;
I knew the pillow covered it, and knew that Jack would wade
Through fire and water both, to save that picture thin and small,
For I had often heard him say, " You are my life, my all."

Soon Jack appeared ; slid down a rope ; rushed through the crowd
to me ;

He dropped the picture in my face, then shut me with his knee :
His hair was singed, his hands were burned, I hardly knew his face :
Oh ! How I wished I then had arms, so Jack I could embrace.

That must have been ten years ago, I really cannot
tell ;

For up in this old attic, dark, a clock without a bell
Is all there is to measure time, and even that is broke ;
And more than that we're not good friends, and so
have never spoke.



I often wonder when I think 'way back of '92,
What have become of all the men whom Jack and I then knew ?
I'm going to try their names to think (for I've nothing else to do),
If Jack were only here to help, I'm sure we'd miss but few.

Sid Robinson and Niles Smith (they sold goods from New York),
Frank Wallace and John Wright, Mel. Baum and C. V. Clark,
J. O. Ballard and Tom Maddox, another Ballard and Fred Pike,
Freeman, Jones and Bosworth, Hans Phelps, and a man named Sykeš.

Frank Potter, and the Robinsons (O. B., George and Rufe),
Then Charley too he soon came on (four brothers in their youth),

And still another of that name, I remember him quite well,
They used to call him Major, but why I cannot tell,

S. H. and O. P. Stearns I knew, people often called them brothers,
They always kept together close, though only cousins ; others
There were that travelled then, Frank Channell and Bill Young,
Then Claude, his son, came after him (some called him "Silver
tongue.")

C. B. Austin, Don McMillan, McNulty (nicknamed " Tuck. ")
Will Allen, M. M. Broga, E. A. Miller and Charley Cook.
Kennehan (John) and Geo. McMullen, also latter's brother Jim,
Pete Doyle, and a man named Emery, I had 'most forgotten him.

Geo. Jackson and Seth Johnson, Dave French and H. E. Gates,
Ben Powell and Frank Morey (they used to be good mates),
Geo. L. Faichney and Tom Fellows, M. Fitzgerald and Will Pruyn,
His father (called the Major) too, then, his brother fell in line.

Henry Rhubart, and one Barber, whose first name I forget,
Will Clark, I'm almost sure was the name of two we met :
Burt Ethridge, H. S. Esselstyn, Joel Pelsue, Howard Pease,
John O'Connor, Page and Beckwith, Cross and Reynolds, we knew
these.

A. J. Phillips, C. M. Wilding, Charley King, and Kimball (Jim),
Will F. Stewart, Geo. B. Day and W. F. Rogers followed him.
J. R. Donovan, O. H. Farnsworth, Hughes (we always called him
Fred),
William Hall, John Rich and Simonds' brothers, and another one
called Ed.

Paul Walker, also Harry, Rufus Worden and Jim Lum,
Also Lewis and McCarthy (I am getting almost dumb),
Perry Miller, and Geo. Kingsley, Ed. Ruggles and Erastus Hall,
R. M. Hill, Ed. Hoyt and Pettibone, young Ed. Wait and Jimmie Call.

Pentland, Dunklee, J. B. Palmer, M. Z. Gates and Paddy Miles,
Baker, Seeley, Weeks, McKenzie, big Russ. Smith (a cousin to Niles),
Merkle, Gerthie, H. E. Merrill, R. M. Stearns and Jennison,
Tiras Hall, Geo. Miles, McCormick, D. S. Brooks, Hort Robinson.

Tobin, Kelley, A. W. Dutton, Morgan Bryan, and Jennie (Ed.)
Geo. Crooks, Will Crooks, " Doctor " Johnson, Frederick Schrimp,
(they called him " Fred."),
Eugene Richardson, A. D. Hamblin, H. J. Wheeler and Parker
(Frank),
Perry, Lummis, Ehle and Sawyer, all with " Drummers " took their
rank.

H. O'Connor, O. C. Taylor, Clark (a son of one C. P.),
J. M. Dix, Lew Smith and Keeler, L. S. Drew and Gould (Fred D.),
E. D. Bettinger, young Jimmie Burns (there were two of this same
name),
Paddy Cox, Will F. Baird, McLeod and E. A. Burlingame.

Randy Hogan and then his brother, Geo. F. Clark and Myron B.,
W. H. Cadwell, Finnegan, Fuller, Klug, O'Connell (called J. T.),
Corcoran, Durfee, Roberts, Russell, Webster, Warren and Robbins
(Jake),
Rob. T. Service, Sam J. Service (hope I'm making no mistake).

Will H. Hackett, Holton, Hungerford, two McCords (the first Will G.),

John McGruer, Horace Moulton, Green and Gillett, ('twas Geo. G.),
J. H. Knowlton, John F. Golden, Geo. H. Oliver, Thomas (John),
F. A. Stokes (his brother also), Sam J. Percy, all were on.

J. B. Abbott, Annanias Thornton, Davis, Jordan, L. M. Lee,
Delaney, Farmer, Henry Abbott, H. K. Wright and John H. Fee;
W. F. Ferguson, C. S. Lansing (we always called this first one Ferg),
Big Frank Titus, E. H. Marshall, these all made each town and burg.

C. A. Parker, Dorman, Kaufman, F. P. Matthews and Frank Moore,
Henry Pierce, Burt Hays and Turnbull (of his first name I'm not
sure),

E. T. Rounds, Geo. Schull, Will Gurley, Clinton Johnson, Taylor
(Hite),

Charley Story, M. W. Shuler (I hope these names are all spelled
right).

Spafford, Carpenter, F. O. Sherman (boys most always called him
"Cap.")

(Real "C. T's" are never jealous, and for names don't care a rap;)

J. L. Brothers, S. L. Brothers, C. F. Drowne and England (Frank),
Also one we called Burt Ingraham, these all came and "walked the
plank."

Last of all, I well remember one young lady (how I blush),
I thought her 'most an Angel (what sweet mem'ries o'er me rush);
Always traveled with her father; mittens, gloves and such things sold;
Seemed like two old chums together, never heard them fret, nor scold.

Let me see — her name was Mary (her father always called her
“May,”)

I knew his heart was full of sadness, when she went so far away,
Stearns her last name (yes, I’m pos’tive) how I’d like to see her now,
Sure I’d take a trip to see her, if I only knew just how.

I wonder if I’ve named them all, that Jack and I then knew?
I’ve tried and tried to think of them, I fear I’ve missed a few,
I’m sure there were some others; O! If Jack was only here:
How can one old Grip remember all the names that once were dear.

Since trying those we knew to name, not failing to be right,
I’ve struggled so to think of them, that out in broad daylight
I’ve thrown a small black bottle: (My! How good it smells!)
It makes me think of times we had when staying at hotels.

Van Buren and Dan Peck, both kept at Gouverneur,
I think they called Van Buren, James, and he burned out I’m sure;
Geo. Bridge, he kept the “Kirby” way down in Watertown,
Dick Bridge was then in Canton, and the “American” held down.

The Getmans at Lafargeville, and Theresa also kept,
Mrs. Hatch was in the Elmhurst at Carthage, where we slept,
John Willson kept at Louisville, “Nick” Bush ’way up in Fine,
Lake and Blood were then at Harrisville, at Hermon was “Rache”
Cline.

Doctor Dunton was at Winthrop, then C. C. Covey came,
At Russell was a man I’m sure they called Bill Burlingame,
The “Albion” at Potsdam was kept by Charley Holmes,
The Wood boys were at Brushton, then Ase Barnett, he comes.

At Hogansburg, the Beros kept, Oliver, John, then Simon came,
Dekalb Junction had the Burnhams, then the Hurleys did the same,
Dunc. Cameron at Fort Covington, Sam. Danforth at Massena,
“At” Dustin kept at Thomasville, Hugh Geehan at Helena.

Will Williams, was at Colton, then Dan McDonald kept,
Shattuck, was at Parishville, Myron Hastings then we met,
Bill Lindsay at South Colton, Jack Laidlaw at Rossie,
Fet. Franklin, was at Hammond, then Worthen, we did see.

Ed. Perry was at Popes Mills, and “Hank” across the Lake,
Deb. Nichols was at Lisbon, then North Lawrence kept awake,
The “Seymour House” at Ogdensburg had Wm. Tallman at its head,
At the “Windsor House” in that same place, Tim Crowley furnished
bread.

Pete McCormick, then Sam Erwin, kept at Rensselaer Falls,
At Madrid Ira Bicknell, then 'twas kept by Harry McCall,
Sid. Phelps he kept the “Whitney House” in Norwood at that time,
Charley Shaw, then David Noble, were at Edwards, Off the Line.

Henry Mason, then one Raven, at Depeyster kept hotel,
Henry Miller over at Croghan, with his “Frow” did very well,
Bill Plimpton at Depauville, Jim Hubbard at Clayton stayed,
Deb. Chamberlain and Ira Taylor, both at Waddington gave aid.

If names I have forgotten, of “Boys” then on the road,
'Tis not because I haven't tried, to place them in this ode,
For all of them were friends of Jack, he respected every man,
And no better men were ever born, than these “Drummers” as a clan.

I've rattled off so many names, I'm almost out of breath,
 (I think I heard that old clock tick, it scared me 'most to death),
 I've talked so long (and may be loud), I woke it up perhaps,
 I think 'tis best for this old Grip, to shut up and collapse.

STRAY "STITCHES." SOME WAXED, OTHERS NOT.

We enter life without our own volition and depart the same,
 therefore the present is all we are sure of. We can do only one thing
 at a time ; let us do that thing well.

* * *

Some ministers talk of God as being only a "Great Principle,"
 but it is as impossible for man to worship a "Principle," as it is for
 him to chew wind.

* * *

Happiness is always felt after helpfulness.

* * *

Persistence is to be commended, but if a hen should set on a
 white china door-knob forever, she could not hatch so much as a key
 hole.

* * *

It is said "A merciful man is merciful to his beast," but I have
 seen men extremely careful of their horse, who were perfectly willing
 their wife should cut the fire wood.

Art, music, signs and words, are all used to express love, but only a life of devotion can prove it.

* * *

A good life is a better sermon for Christianity than the best ever written.

* * *

A candid opinion is often asked, and usually it is a "candied" that is wanted.

* * *

Nothing sounds so sweet as the human voice — to the one who is doing the talking.

* * *

When we get what we want, it is seldom what we wanted.

* * *

I notice that reformers are always talking of the faults that others possess, instead of their own.

* * *

If we look for bad qualities in our friends we shall find them: The hog prefers rooting in the mire, to eating potatoes that are washed; so does the critic.

* * *

"Good advice," as it is called, may give an unfortunate something to chew on, but it is not very satisfying to an empty stomach.

* * *

The higher the aim in life, the less the temptation.

If you measure life by what you receive, it will be a failure ; if you measure it by what you give, the world cannot rob you of your reward.

* * *

A good place to tell a hog from a man is in a crowded railroad car.

* * *

Religion with many men is like their property, — “ All in their wife’s name.”

* * *

Every person’s influence counts for something in moulding the character of others, and that influence lives for ages after we are forgotten.

* * *

A man or woman who would strike a child, is unworthy the confidence of their fellowmen.

* * *

Did you ever notice that when people ask your advice, it is not advice they want, but simply a sanction of their own plans and opinions ?

* * *

Of all the many soaps so extensively advertised, none are claimed to cleanse a soiled character ; and no net, be it ever so finely meshed, can gather a lost opportunity.

* * *

Many a man earns his bread by the sweat of his “ frow.”

Endearing words are sweet to the ear, but enduring deeds are life to the soul.

* * *

It is much easier to make a fool of a man than it is to make a man of a fool.

* * *

Happiness, like the rainbow, can never be felt by seeking it, but it is the constant companion of those who forget themselves in the doing for others.

PART II

PERSONAL POEMS

THE BELATED GIRLS.

WRITTEN BY MAUDE E. STEARNS.

“’T WAS the month of March, Eighteen ninety-four,
When a Drummer came to this City ;”
And if beside visiting there hadn’t been more,
Not I, would be writing this ditty.

This visit was made on Old Maids Three,
Whom he found as happy as they could be ;
For the man long looked for had really come ;
Even though he was a real old “ Bum.”

Many nights had each lain and listened in vain,
And oft grabbed each other e’en at sound of the rain ;
So that one night the “ blonde ” prepared to fly ;
Thought of the “ man in the hall,” then jumped back to cry.

Well, as I’ve told you before, this loved man arrived.
Each girl for the first kiss madly strived ;
Though I’ve heard it remarked, how it made him feel,
To see them appear in “ dishabille.”

Such a visit they had, with this man tall,
Until he left them for Mannercher Hall ;
And when descending “ Con ” stairs, the girls were seen,
There he was hanging to the lamp-post green.

Next morn he left them at half past five,
Pretending for Carthage, and then for a drive ;
But hearken ! this man was not selling shoes —
But instead “down town” he was courting the Muse.

SEQUEL.

Now the girls are mad at this man tall,
(When his form vanished they wanted to bawl)
To think after these delightful days three,
He'd still rather be courting on “Genesee.”

AN ANSWER TO “BELATED GIRLS.”

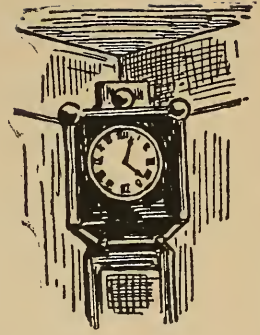
YOUR beautiful “Ditty” received to-day,
Of a “Drummer’s Trouble” in a far away
City, ’twas read with care, more than once ;
If I did not answer I’d be a dunce.

Another edition I’ll write of this,
Beginning with — well — let’s begin with a kiss ;
For the end I’m sure will be much sweeter,
Than if it began in just common meter.

The real truth in my first was not half told ;
But now I am getting by practice so bold
That let come what will, I’ll speak the truth
Of these sweet girls three, of grace and youth.

Now these girls all keep time by an old "alarm
clock ;"

Not the one in the story of "Dickery Dock,"
But one which each girl can manipulate
To suit her own hours, be they early, or late.



The eldest of all has a "Feller," "out West,"
Of all men in the world, she thinks him the best ;
So every night before going to bed,
She writes him all thoughts she has had in her head.

She writes, and writes, and writes ; and then
Turns the old clock back to "a Quarter of Ten ;"
Then muses : "The other two girls I'll fool,
In the morning I'll change it 'fore going to school."

The next girl has a scholar on violin,
She turns the clock back to favor him,
And says "His lesson's not half long enough,
I'll just show the girls 'I'm up to snuff.'"

Thus, instead of teaching him "Half an Hour,"
She has the old clock right under her power,
And the hands she turns till their very head whirls ;
All the time saying "I've fooled them girls."

The sweet young "Blonde" has a teacher in Greek,
(I'm almost too modest of her to speak),
She too, wants the time, when with him, to move slow ;
So the hands of the clock she turns to and fro.

The "Greek man" comes (or should come) at one ;
Should stay half an hour, and then go home ;
But he lingers an hour, and then a half,
While the old clock covers its face to laugh.

This clock is owned by Mr. Garrett,
And how in the world this man can bear it
To see his old timepiece abused in this way,
Is more than I am prepared to say.

Now I want to ask, " Is it any wonder,
That this clock one morn made such a blunder
And woke the ' Drummer ' a half hour late,
So he missed the train and had to wait ? "

HYMN

WRITTEN FOR ORDINATION SERVICE OF REV. HARRY E.
TOWNSEND, JULY 11, 1894.

GREAT God above, look down in love
On this thy servant dear ;
May his young heart, from Thee ne'er part,
But be from sin kept clear.

May he ne'er stray from wisdom's way ;
A gentle shepherd be ;
The wounded heal, for others feel,
And from their sins set free.

May all his ways, be lit with rays
Of love, from Thy great throne ;
Give him the power, through all life's hour,
To bring the wanderer home.

May he bring peace, and love increase
Where'er his voice is heard ;
Steadfast and true, life's journey through,
Firm, trusting in Thy word.

And at life's close, may calm repose
Rest down on this Thy son ;
And may he hear the welcome dear,
"Come home, thou hast well done."

THE PHOTOGRAPH.

TO J. J. DOTY.

A photo, by mail, came to us to-day,
Of two ladies, two men, and a house far away ;
We think it just lovely, and well taken, too,
And always will keep it quite plainly in view.

The house on the bank of a river is located,
'Mid trees, vines, and flowers, 'tis situated ;
A cozy home place we know it to be,
And the family, our friends, consisting of three.

The head of the house, bare headed and bald,
(He who sits on the left) Jay Doty, is called ;
For many long years we have known him to be
A friend true and trusty, large-hearted, and free.

His wife (at his left), Oh ! My ! she is sweet,
'Tis lucky for Doty he first did her meet ;
And yet it is better, he needs a good wife,
For without one he'd lead a most unhappy life.

The son (at the right), a good, clever young man,
He worships his mother, dispute it who can ;
An honor to parents and friends, may he be ;
Why some girl don't grab him, is a wonder to me.

A stranger appears in the family group,
She sits quite demure at the right of the stoop ;
She looks a bit old to be Chester's intended,
Yet matters like these are easily mended.

We thank you sincerely for that photo sending,
May our family friendship last on without ending ;
May Doty's and Stearns', old, young, great and small,
Be friends now, and always, with each, one and all.

ANSWER TO "THE PHOTOGRAPH."

BY J. J. DOTY.

VACATION has come to you again, why not come and visit Jay?
His barn is rather shabby but there's plenty of grain and hay;
The larder is stocked as well as ever stocked before,
With turkeys, chickens, garden sass, and countless things galore.

Business foots up well for the year of '96,
And we feel doubly grateful when so many are "In a fix;"
Come and give thanks with us, to the ever blessed Lord;
We'll vote you the freedom of the home, and the best we can afford.

We received from your hands, not many days ago,
Acknowledgement of a picture of our home, with so and so
In the form of a poem, which was written so tersely and neat,
That we read it to our friends and neighbors, and think it quite
complete.

The reference to the inmates of our home, is very kind
And flattering too, had we not heard the saying that "Love is blind;"
When you speak of the "Bald headed man" of course it can do no
harm,
But it's lucky for you it was written so far from his strong right arm

We read the poem together at our quiet fireside,
And talked of the friendship formed long ago, which we wish may
ever abide;

We read of your kindly wishes, and our eyes were filled with tears,
And we said, "How sweet are friendships in these rapidly passing
years."

But friendships formed on earth must end, no matter how dear they
be ;

Separation will cause us pain, but then it is the Father's decree ;
May not only Stearns' and Doty's, but everyone, for to all a promise
is given,

Form a friendship unending, eternal and true, with "Our Father who
art in Heaven."

THE POEM.

TO J. J. DOTY.

YOURS of a few days ago has been received,
And had I not seen it I'd scarcely believed
That you, J. J. Doty, had become such a poet,
For never before in the least, did you show it.

This all goes to prove (and your poem shows)
That our friends possess virtues besides those we know ;
I thought though, I knew all that you had before,
For I've given you credit for having a score.

Had the poem been written by Abbie (the dear)
I would not been surprised, nor thought a bit queer,
For of all the good wives I ever have met,
She's the smartest of all (save my own) I've seen yet.

She can bake, she can brew, and keep such a slick house,
And she does it so quiet, that not even a mouse
Would at all be disturbed if he saw her at work,
And might be very happy, in her presence to lurk.

My folks read your poem, and called you a "dandy,"
And seemed more surprised you could do it so handy,
Of course, I was more careful of giving you praise,
Merely saying, "I'll answer it one of these days."

When you spoke of your "Larder" it just made my mouth water ;
And your barn is as good as though it was hotter,
Those doughnuts and coffee, and biscuit and butter,
That Abbie can make, are "Too utterly utter."

And when my wife read of that good "garden sass,"
I thought she would fly there, but she couldn't, alas ;
For though she is worthy an angel to be,
Her "other half" isn't (in this you'll agree).

To make you a visit every Stearns would be glad,
And we all do agree that 'tis really too bad
That we can't, but really my wife is not able,
For as yet she eats little at her own dinner table.

We think she is gaining, though a little bit slow ;
 She has been very sick, as perhaps you may know,
 It may be bye and bye when she gets somewhat better,
 She'll write you herself a good, friendly letter.

That your "Business foots up well" I really am glad,
 For with many, the past year has been very bad ;
 I hope '97 will be very much brighter,
 For when business is good, our work seems the lighter.

In regard to the man who owns the "Bald head,"
 He himself is to blame, for 'twas Ralph who once said,
 "If you'll go in the cellar I'll get you some hair,
 For we keep it for Papa, and have some to spare."

To be honest and candid (which for me is hard work)
 Your poem was good, and the truth I'll not shirk ;
 It was worthy an answer I could not compose,
 'Tis like sending a thistle when it should be a rose.

A MODERN MIRACLE.

And Martha, who dwelt in a far-off country, sent a message unto her Brother, saying: "Behold I show you a miracle; from the small fragment of pig sent me, I return unto you a whole hog (minus the tail)."

TWAS a few years ago, perhaps six, seven or eight,
 That a family whose name it was Stearns,
 Had a big Christmas dinner as I will relate
 For the pleasure of those it concerns.

They invited their friends from the North, East and West,
And those from the South, too, were there,
Their Mothers and Cousins and those they loved best
Had all kindly consented to share.

The Brothers and Sisters, they also had come
To partake of this family dinner,
For none had been slighted, no not a one,
But welcomed alike saint and sinner.

The day it was pleasant, the weather was cold,
The table had plenty for all,
The food it was tempting, for both young and old,
And each guest was helped at his call.

There were puddings and pies, apple dumplings and cake,
Good old fashioned "Nut Cakes" with holes ;
For the woman who cooked, could the very best make,
From receipts that were both new and old.

Young turkeys, old hens, little lambs and old cows,
Had been slaughtered to furnish this table ;
For each of the family had made solemn vows,
"To set up the best they were able."

But the best thing of all that was furnished to eat,
Was a large, fat and handsome young pig,
You can bet your "last dollar" it couldn't be beat,
And it made all the Stearnses feel big.

Now the head of the family (they called him O. P.),
Had a Sister in Bridgeport, " Down East,"
Her name it was spelled M-a-double-t,
And her absence he felt at the feast.

This Sister he loved, as a good brother should,
And he wanted to send her a token
Of the dinner they had, and he thought that he could,
If only it would not get broken.

His brain he did rack, for it must go by mail,
(Or at least that would be much the wiser);
Then he said to himself, " I'll send the pig's tail,
For that part will be sure to surprise her."

Then he sharpened his knife, cut it off very nice,
Done it up in a pink tissue paper,
And thought, as he tied it with string, once or twice,
" I'm sure she'll think that's just the caper."

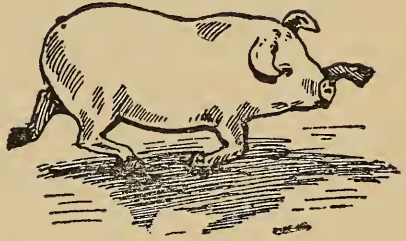
Then the name he wrote boldly " Mrs. Franklin V. Clark,"
(And you know he's a beautiful writer?)
He felt all the time just as gay as a lark,
For he said " Now she won't think we slight her."

The package he carried and put in the mail,
With a large number of postage stamps on it,
For the sure, safe arrival of that piggy's tail,
Weighed more on his mind than this sonnet.

Not a thing from this tail had ever been heard,
Since the hour he so carefully sent it,
Till a few days ago, a niece brought him word
That made him ask her three times "If she meant it?"

For Lo! and behold! this tail of a pig
Had been turned into hog without
tail.

This surely beats all of the miracles big,
E'en of Jonah, who "Swallowed the
whale?"



The Bible says, "Water was turned into wine;"
"Thousands fed with one small loaf of bread;"
But that don't compare with the tail of a swine
Being changed to a hog with a head.

And what is a miracle equally big
(Or surely it seems so to me),
The tail was all gone, not even a sprig
Was there left, you could possibly see.

Now if a hog can be made from a little pig's tail,
Why can't roosters be made from one feather,
Or from one little shoe string, you ought not to fail
To make at least two sides of leather?

What process was used by this lady "Down East,"
To make such a miraculous change,
Is one of the things, of which I know the least,
And sure never helped to arrange.

I know I sent her of a pig the tip end,
And she sent back to me a whole hog ;
I suppose if the tail of a puppy I'd sent,
When returned, 'twould have been a big dog.

This lady I'm sure, ought to go with a "Show,"
With "Bailey," or "Forepaugh," or "Barnum,"
For when they found out just what she could do,
They would pay her "Big Money" to "Larn 'Em."

ON THE BIRTH OF PAUL STEARNS ELLISON AND DONALD DAY GOODNOW.

TO THE MOTHERS.

A BABY to our home has come.
It is our first, our only one ;
Not one whose coming was a dread,
But welcome as an "Angel's tread."

Happy we were before he came,
Thrice happy now we justly claim ;
For happiness of home, and two,
Is trebled by a "baby's coo."

His hands — how weak — and oh, how small,
Yet hold the heart strings of us all ;
And though his lips speak not a word,
Our hearts are by his music stirred.

His fingers with their bright pink tips,
His soft bright eyes and rosy lips,
All these seem but as gifts of leaven
To raise our thoughts and hopes to Heaven.

His chubby feet and dainty toes,
More dainty than the fragrant rose,
Bring sighs of anxious, quiet dread
Of paths in future, he must tread.

Where'er your path, whate'er your lot,
May home be e'er your brightest spot.
May truth and justice fill your soul,
"True manhood" be your one great goal.

No gift so great, no joy so true
Is ever known, in this world through,
As that of Mother, when so blest,
First presses "baby" to her breast.

My lips I press to thy sweet brow,
A prayer I breathe, as softly now
I sing to thee love's lullabies,
And watch thee close those baby eyes.

Just one more kiss, and then good-night.
May God protect and keep thee right,
Through all thy nights, and all thy days,
May his love keep thee in his ways.

PAUL'S VALENTINE.

MY darling little grandson, Paul ; —
I s'pose to you, 'twas but a scrawl
That mama made, with pen so fine,
And sent me, as "Paul's Valentine."

'Twas just a picture of your hand ;
That wasn't much, — but — well, "My Land,"
It ain't no use to tell a lie,
I had to really almost cry.



"Age 14 weeks and just 4 days."
I wonder if an Angel's ways
Are any sweeter, or their kiss,
Than Babies', at an age like this?

I know you're little, young and weak,
And only "Baby language" speak ;
But I can hear you every day,
E'en though you are so far away.

And every night when I'm in bed,
I think of Paul — and times I led
His mother, when a baby, she
Lived with your Grandma and me.

And then I think of Aunty May,
And Mena, too, and for them pray ;
And Uncle Harry and Grandma,
And ne'er forget your Ma and Pa.

Always I pray that God will bless
Each one of these, and all the rest
I pray for them ; but last of all
I pray for Ralph and little Paul.

OUR COUSIN'S VISIT FROM THE CITY.

A GIRL from New York City,
Who is genial, sweet and witty,
And who works where mimic lightning is for sale,
Made her mind up she would travel,
And the wrinkles would unravel
That had gathered on her face, so thin and pale.

For her thoughts ran something this way :
"I have worked both nights and Sunday,
And of week days not a single one have skipped ;
E'en my dresses have not mended ;
Neither to my soul attended ;
And they both I vow are getting sadly ripped."

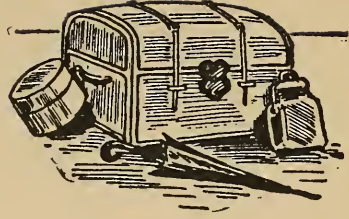
"I have labored late and early,
When my "boss" was cross and surly ;
And have never "sassed" him back a single word ;
I have read a million letters ;
I have worn cast iron fetters ;
Not to speak of other things that have occurred."

"If I don't get out and vacate,
And my Maker try to placate,
By and by He'll send my soul 'Way down below ;'
For it never was intended
That a life be spent and ended,
With no chance for either soul, or self, to grow."

"I just want a chance to revel,
And to raise the very D — l,
And I know the very, very bestest place,
'Tis up North, among my cousins,
I can count 'em by the dozens,
And every one is aching now to see my face."

"I'll just ask for a vacation ;
And don't care if all creation
Says I ought to stay in this old shop and work ;
It is I who earns my money,
And it seems most awful funny,
If I'm never in my life allowed to shirk."

So she packed up all her "Duffle,"
Never leaving out a ruffle ;
Wondering if she'd better go on cars, or boat ;
And she felt so light and airy,
Getting ready things to carry,
That I really think in water she would float.



On her way to "Central Station,"
She felt bigger than Creation,
And she shook the city dust from off her feet ;
For she knew her cousins missed her,
And 'twas long since they had kissed her,
And 'twas worth a whole year's wages them to meet.

Well : — The cars were finally started ;
And she grew the lighter hearted,
As they farther in the country towns did reach ;
Her heart beat fast, and faster,
As the trees and fields flew past her,
And she felt she'd have to stand right up and screech.

But her journey finally ended,
And she reached the place intended,
Where the cousins lived, whose latter name was Stearns ;
They were tickled half to pieces
When they saw her large valises,
And they said " We'll make her stay — and stay — by turns."

L. of C.

“ We will take her out to Mother’s,
And we’ll let her see some others,
But her time shall just with us be mostly spent ;
We will get her fat, and rested,
We will have her stomach tested
By eating ’tato, meat, and other condiments.”

“ She can lounge down by the river ;
She can live on chicken’s liver ;
She can sleep down in the “ Boat house ” if she will ;
She can dress in some old wrapper ;
With no style shall we entrap her,
But we’re bound of comfort she shall get her fill.”

So we talked of days in childhood,
Of picnics in the wildwood,
When George, and Henry, Matt and Jen were young ;
They all lived then with “ Aunt Mary,”
And Em, lived with Aunt Sarah,
And thus ’twas songs of childhood that we sung.

We talked too, of things that later
Came unto this same narrator,
When he married Alma Eldridge, young and sweet ;
How they went to New York City,
Oh ! indeed it was a pity
That the Bridegroom by some goblin was not eat.

'Cause no man was ever greener,
And if you had only seen her
You would wonder that the bride could had such taste ;
For the groom was tall and slender,
And for this world was too tender,
(He just measured eighteen inches round the waist.)

Then we talked of Eighteen Eighty,
Things had then become quite weighty,
Children (three) had come to cheer and bless our home ;
Cousin Mena us did visit,
Nineteen years ago,— My ! Is it ?
Can it be so long a time has flown ?

It must be we've all grown older,
(Yet our love has not grown colder)
Since our cousin came to see us, on the farm ;
Time makes friendship all the sweeter ;
When — well “ my good, gracious Peter,”
I am getting sentimental “ I'll be darn.”

Well ! with Matt and Wilhelmena
I went one day to Massena,
What a lovely time we had, I'll ne'er forget ;
When we sat down to the table,
Really — I am quite unable
To enumerate and tell the things we eat.

Then we drove to see the "Ditches,"
And the girls did act like witches,
You would thought they were not over 'teen years old ;
Every one we met just wondered
If in some way I had blundered,
And of someone else's wife had not got hold.

But some things are all too fleeting,
Parting always comes from meeting,
All too soon our cousin left, and said "Good Bye" ;
Would she come again this summer
Just to see her cousin "Drummer,"
He would tickled be — (and now this is no lie.)

For with Alma, May and Harry,
(Baby Paul, we'd let you carry)
Maude and Luther, Ralph and Mena too are here,
I am sure we'd make you happy —
Guess perhaps you're getting gappy,
So Good-bye, I'll go and drop a silent tear.

TO MY LITTLE BOY RALPH.

He gave me a box of paper and envelopes and said "Papa, won't you write me some verses?"

MY dear little boy I'm going to write you :
This is my "birthday" I'm just Fifty-two,
Six times your own age and four years more,
You see I am getting almost "Three score."

I am glad I'm your papa, and you are my boy,
For we're happy together, and all of our joy
Is just twice as great when together are we,
For I love you dearly, and I know you love me.

A long time ago ('twas before you came),
I wished, and wished, and wished again
That we had a nice boy, just about like you,
And bye and bye, the wish came true.

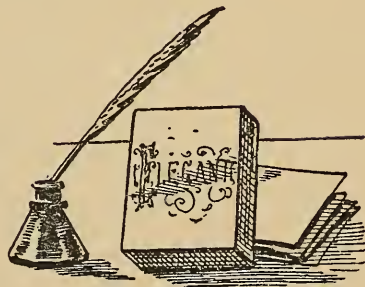
And Mama, and Maude, and Mena, and May,
Were awful glad, too, that you came to stay,
And be our own little baby, and brother,
For we rather have you than to have any other.

When you were a baby, and so tiny and small,
We all hoped you'd live to be big and tall ;
And now you're a boy, and just past eight,
We want you to try to be good and great.

I 'most know you will always be kind and true,
For you love papa, and papa loves you ;
And if you should ever do wrong, and be bad,
You know it would make me feel sorry and sad.

It was nice that you thought of my "Birth-
day,"

And gave me this paper to write on, and say
Things I want to, when "Off on the road,"
For the things which I think, would make
most a load.



Every morning, I wonder, if you'll be good all day ;
If you'll go to school ; if you'll have a nice play ;
If you'll help your dear Mama, and Mena, too ;
And do for them both, all you ought to do.

And when it comes night, and I go to bed,
I wish I could see you, and sometimes dread
To go alone, for I wish so much you were close to me,
For you know I love you, and I know, you love me.

You see I have written these verses to you,
'Cause you asked "If I would?" and what could I do
Only just what you asked me? and why should I not?
For you're Papa's own boy, and he loves you a lot.

ALMA BERNICE TOWNSEND.

INSCRIBED TO HER MOTHER.

OUR darling, little Baby dear ;
It seems as yet a little queer
To know for us you have come down
From "Way up there in Angel town."

When coming through the gates of Heaven,
"St. Peter" must himself have given
A long-drawn sigh of fond regret,
To lose so dear a household pet.

We know to us you were but loaned,
And still by Heaven are really owned ;
Yet e'en the Angels must you miss,
And lose a little of their bliss.

We look into your soft, clear eyes ;
Our hearts are filled with glad surprise
That God to us has been so good,
And blest us with true Motherhood.

We know that God is kind and true ;
Perhaps he thought we needed you
To fill our home with music sweet,
And make our happiness complete.

For nothing in this world is half
So sweet to hear, as baby's laugh ;
No gem so rich, nor pure, nor rare,
That with a baby's kiss compare.

Before you came, we often thought
Love's labors for our home had wrought
A happiness next akin to Heaven,
More precious than to others given ;

But now we have an added bliss,
No greater one could come than this ;
And deep down in our hearts we pray
That God with us will let you stay.

Although you cannot speak a word,
Your voice to us is like a bird ;
And e'en can hardly move your hand,
Yet " Mother's love " can understand.

How blessed a thing a baby's " coo "
It thrills the heart of parent true ;
Their weakness is their greatest power
For love increases every hour.

Now go to sleep our baby dear,
Thy father and thy mother hear
Each word, and wish thy heart would speak,
For love is strong e'en thou art weak.

Now close thine eyes and let sweet rest
Come o'er thee, while on mother's breast
Thy little hand it gently lays ;
And mother for thee softly prays,—

" Our Father, we do humbly pray
That every moment, every day,
Thy strength and goodness may be given,
To help us guide her steps to Heaven."

FIFTH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY OF LUTHER
AND MAUDE ELLISON.

LET'S see! 'Twas just five years ago to-day
We two began our life together,
And promised that we'd each be true
In stormy as in pleasant weather.

How fast the time has seemed to go,
By days, not years it could be reckoned ;
Each year has passed more like a month,
Each hour seems now more like a second.

Great things to us have been quite strangers ;
Our life has been like that of many others,
And yet we've passed what some call " dangers,"
That come to fathers and to mothers.

We married just for pure, sweet love,
And time has only added to it ;
E'en though not mated up " above,"
Yet neither one has felt to rue it.

Our hearts today are just a little closer wedded
Than when we gladly made the solemn vow ;
And in each soul the thought is firmly bedded
" We were happy then, but we are happier now."

Our home has had one gift too great to measure,
A baby ! who has made us think of Heaven ;
Sure God could send no greater treasure,
And love could have no greater leaven.

Then let us thankful be, and draw our hearts yet nearer
To that perfect peace which love alone can bring ;
Time makes true love but the clearer,
And makes the heart with happiness to sing.

BABY EARLE BURNHAM ELLISON.

BORN SUNDAY EVENING, MAY 12, '01.

ANOTHER baby ! And a boy !
And thus we have an added joy.

When you came down thro' the azure blue,
Can it be that God and the Angels knew
How welcome you would be ?

Can it be that in that " far off land,"
Our hearts' sweet hopes they understand,
And then an answer send ?

We're taught "E'en God when only One,
Was happier made by that dear Son
Who in the 'Manger' lay."

How much more then should we be blest,
By the coming to our dear "home nest"
Of a baby boy like you.

Dear Lord, as long as we may live,
We ask, Pure wisdom Thou wilt give
To guide these minds aright.

And when at close of life we rest,
May we find beyond, that same "Home nest,"
With those whom Thou gave us here.



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